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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5136
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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 COPENHAGEN 000367

SENSITIVE
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DEPT FOR S/SECC, OES, EUR/NE

E.O. 12958: N/A
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SUBJECT: Danish Climate Minister on G-20, COP-15

(U) SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED; PROTECT ACCORDINGLY. NOT FOR
INTERNET DISTRIBUTION.

¶1. (U) This message contains an action request for OES/EGC--see para
¶11.

¶2. (SBU) Summary: In an August 27 courtesy call, the Ambassador
assured Climate and Energy Minister Connie Hedegaard that the U.S.
remains committed to seeking a successful outcome at COP-15 climate
talks in Copenhagen in December. Hedegaard expressed appreciation
for U.S. engagement in international climate talks, and willingness
to work together to ensure a successful COP-15 outcome.

¶3. (SBU) Hedegaard also urged the U.S. to assert its leadership in
international climate negotiations by:
--detailing how it will reduce emissions from 2020-2050;
--including climate financing in the agenda for the G20 summit in
Pittsburg; and by
--weighing in with the Russian leadership to prevent unhelpful
Russian climate initiatives. End Summary.

¶4. (U) The Ambassador, accompanied by REO, paid her initial call on
Climate Minister Connie Hedegaard on August 27. Hedegaard was
joined by the Danish climate negotiator, Thomas Becker, and by her
chief of staff, Morten Sorensen. Hedegaard acknowledged that she
has been pleased by the approach of the new Administration on
climate change.

U.S. Climate Legislation

¶5. (SBU) The Ambassador told Hedegaard that President Obama
remained firmly committed to seeking global solutions to the
challenge of climate change, including a successful outcome at
COP-15, and that he is engaged both domestically and internationally
to do so. SECC Stern and the Secretary have advanced bilateral
negotiations with major developing countries, including China and
India. On the domestic front, the Ambassador pointed to the
dramatic steps taken by the President on auto standards, and noted
that the U.S. House of Representatives also demonstrated commitment
with the passage of the Waxman-Markey bill. The Ambassador noted
several times that the Waxman-Markey bill is "as good as it will
get," and that a Senate bill would not be more ambitious--but
perhaps less so. Asked by Hedegaard how the ongoing healthcare

debate would affect pending U.S. legislation on climate change, the Ambassador said the two issues are unrelated and being handled separately.

China

¶16. (SBU) Hedegaard said her government appreciated what it perceived as a dramatic shift in U.S. engagement in international climate negotiations since the change of U.S. administration. The U.S. shift had in turn helped to move other major economies, including China, toward assuming greater responsibility under an international agreement. She asked if specific outcomes were expected from U.S.-China bilateral dialogue before COP-15. Hedegaard said the Danish government perceived China to be committed to addressing climate change for its own domestic reasons involving its economic development, and wishes to avoid any appearance of doing so in response to international pressure. Europe and the U.S. probably share the same interest in "protecting our roles as major players in this (technology) area," she said, indicating her belief that China might emerge as a leader in this field if the U.S. and Europe do not work together to demonstrate leadership.

U.S. Emissions Target Path

¶17. (SBU) Hedegaard urged the U.S. to clarify its pathway for interim emission reduction commitments between 2020 and 2050. Doing so would "help us understand how the U.S. will get from its 2020 goal to its more ambitious 2050 goal," strengthening U.S.

COPENHAGEN 00000367 002 OF 002

credibility in the international climate negotiation.

Climate Financing at G20

¶18. (SBU) Hedegaard said there had been some discussion of financing at MEF preparatory meetings before the G8 Summit in l'Aquila, and inquired whether it was true that financing adaptation would be part of the agenda at the upcoming G20 meeting in Pittsburgh. The G20 Summit offers an opportunity to make progress toward agreement on international donor financing of climate change. An international donor commitment of funds for climate change adaptation (Becker suggested an initial commitment of up to 1 billion dollars or Euros, and agreement on some restructuring of international financial architecture) would be "crucial" to advance negotiations with the developing countries, she suggested. Such a signal from the developed world would help encourage support among least developed countries, small island states, and many African nations, whose interests differ from those of the major emerging nations such as China, India and Brazil.

Russia A Spoiler?

¶19. (SBU) Hedegaard also specifically raised the issue of Russia, with the hope that the U.S. might play a role here. She said she had visited Moscow in June and was concerned that Russian pride might complicate the quest for agreement at COP-15 unless "someone--and that can only be the U.S.--takes action to engage top Russian leaders (Putin, Medvedev, Lavrov) beforehand. Only the U.S. had the clout to engage these leaders on climate, she said. Doing so could help to quell growing resentment by Russian officials of perceived U.S. neglect. Russia is alone among major industrial economies in projecting steep growth in its emissions between 2020 and 2050, she said.

Comment

¶10. (SBU) In contrast with the Prime Minister a day before (SepTel), Hedegaard did not raise Denmark's intention that the UN identify the COP-15 meeting as a heads of state summit. She did allude to strong local interest whether President Obama will attend COP-15, but seemed prepared for the Ambassador's non-committal

response, conditioned on progress in climate negotiations and the progress of U.S. legislation.

¶11. (SBU) Action Request: Hedegaard said she would visit Washington in mid-September and asked for suggestions on how she might best promote a successful outcome at COP-15 in Copenhagen in December. Please advise if the Department wishes to take up Hedegaard's offer to consider suggestions for useful engagement or public messages during her upcoming U.S. visit.

FULTON